

Best Practice #042, Promoting Demonstrations
Heading: Meetings and Demonstrations
Issued: March 2007

When chapters schedule presentations by notable woodturners, or demonstrate new lathes or other tools by manufacturers, it is most important that they promote these events to ensure maximum turnout. Promotion pays off in many ways – it can help bring in new membership and entrance fees, it can garner wider exposure and enthusiasm for your club, it can sometimes get you news coverage, and it can help attract other demonstrators, and even bigger audiences, in the future.

A solid attendance will encourage the demonstrators, too. “How many members do you have?” is often the first question a potential presenter will ask, for obvious reasons. An equipment manufacturer will be more likely to donate supplies to a chapter if it shows it can generate a good and interested crowd of onlookers. A turner’s interest in presenting a top-flight demonstration will certainly increase when the audience is large and eager to learn.

So, how do you engineer the publicity to get a big turnout? Here are some strategies that are likely to prove most effective:

Public and Press Notices

Many local newspapers will allow you to place a “Public Notice” at no charge. If your chapter covers a regional geographic area – and might attract attendees from a fairly wide area – it’s worth identifying the daily and weekly papers and neighborhood periodicals you will need to contact.

You may decide, for example, to target an area in which people could travel to your event within a 1-½-hour drive radius. To find the news outlets in this area, you can go to your local public library reference section and review the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*. All the local media outlets are listed in this book. Searching within your state, all the counties will be listed in alphabetical order. Make a list all the newspapers, their telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses (the e-mail addresses are especially important; this is how you will send your press releases). You also can log onto <http://www.newspapers.com/index.htm> and search by state.

Don’t forget any large metropolitan cities where people from your area might reside. Papers from these cities may be harder to approach, but many have websites with lists of future public meetings. You should call the newspapers first and verify their e-mail address and the deadline for your releases. About three weeks prior to your demonstration, e-mail a press release or media advisory to all the newspapers you wrote down during your research at the library.

A sample of one public notice reads:

ATTENTION ALL WOODWORKERS
FREE WOODTURNING DEMONSTRATION

Sponsored by

The West Virginia Woodturners Association, Inc.

Saturday, February 24 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SJ Neathawk Lumber Company
771 North Jefferson Street
Lewisburg, WV 24901
Store Phone: 304-645-1351

For more information contact:
Rodney LehrBass at 304-647-4647 or e-mail
rlehrbass@masterplan-inc.com

Public is Welcome!

Include any information you think will stir up attention, but keep it brief. Most papers will place the release as written, without editing, if you show self-control when writing it. Attach this release to the e-mail and write in the e-mail text something like:

Please see press release attached to this e-mail, which we would like posted in your paper as a public notice the week of Feb. 12. We would be grateful if you could also run it the following week at no further charge.

Our experience has shown that 90 percent of our attendance was due to this press release method.

Local Radio

Radio is an amazing and effective conduit to the public. Many radio stations will announce a local calendar of events.

Ask the radio stations that broadcast in your area to announce your demonstration as a public awareness announcement. You can get all the information for this while preparing your press release list. The book that lists the newspapers also lists all radio stations as well.

Posted Flyers

Make up flyers that you can display at your local hardware stores, library, grocery stores, post offices, any place that sells tools or wood, and all your local galleries or antique shops. Most public places will usually post flyers if you ask permission.

Flyers should be colorful and informative to attract attention. This is where you can write more details about the demonstration topic and background about presenter. You should list anything special happening at the demonstration, such as door prizes / raffles, refreshments, show-and-tell, or special guest speakers. Here is one sample flyer:

The **W**est **V**irginia **W**oodturners **A**ssociation

A local chapter of The American Association of Woodturners

WVWA will be holding its monthly demonstration

Saturday, February 24 – 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

SJ Neathawk Lumber Company

711 North Jefferson Street

Lewisburg, WV 24901

Store Phone: 304-645-1351

½ Mile north of I-64 on 219N.

The **W**est **V**irginia **W**oodturners **A**ssociation is intended for all skill levels

Beginners are highly encouraged to attend.

Come and build friendships, learn, teach, share, and improve your turning skills

Join us for:

Product demonstrations, basic and advanced turning techniques, adhesives, finishing, wood identification, and more!

Door prizes will be given, and a raffle will be held.

Refreshments will be served.

Bring your extra turning blanks and fresh tunable wood for our
'Waste Not - Want Not' giveaway drawing.

► Bring your turned projects for Show and Tell. ◀

For more information and driving instructions contact:

**Rodney LehrBass at 304-647-4647 or e-mail me at
rlehrbass@masterplan-inc.com**

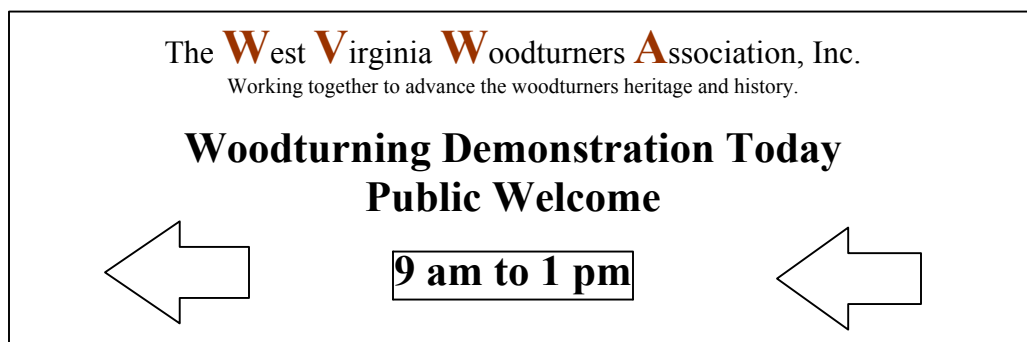
Newspaper Advertisements

If your demonstration will be held at a business or well-known location, use this to your advantage. Businesses know that they will have increased sales as a result of your demonstrating at their location. This is why they allow you to use their space in the first place. Ask the business to include your demonstration information in their next advertisement, or even run a special ad for your demonstration. Give them a picture of your demonstrator or one of your members turning at a lathe and ask them to include it in the advertisement. They are going to run an ad anyway, so why not promote your demonstration in the process?

Banners

Have a banner made that can be placed by the street the day of your demonstration. Approach those passing by to peek in too. Many people are actually looking for something to do and will stop just to see what's going on.

Banners are fairly inexpensive and easy to store. A local business may be willing to have one made for your chapter, if it will promote something for them at the same time. Banners might look like this:



(The time and arrows are fastened on by Velcro so they can be changed as needed.)

Finally, good old word-of-mouth is still the best publicity technique. When you invite your neighbors and friends and family members personally, they are the ones most likely to show up.

These ideas can help increase the response to your chapter's next demonstration.

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